

FACTS AND COMMENT ABOUT EL PASO AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

El Paso City of Homes

The best informed real estate operators among us who have acquainted themselves with conditions in other cities as well as here very generally make the statement that there is a larger ratio of the citizens of El Paso who own their own homes than in any other city in the United States. This ambition on the part of the resident of El Paso to stop paying rent and own his own home began a long time ago. The effort is being made in an ever increasing number of cases. This depends, probably, upon several conditions. We have, generally speaking, a more prosperous class of citizens here than elsewhere, and so more of them are able to acquire a home for themselves. The high cost of rent a few years ago gave a great impetus to this policy of securing a home. The possibility of living out of doors is a strong influence against life in flats and apartment buildings or family hotels. The wide expanse of the territory in and near the city and the comparatively inexpensive style of house necessary in this climate have added their influence. The abundant street car service and low rates of fare have aided, and the tract subdivisionists have done a great deal to induce buyers to invest in a lot on which sooner or later the intention is to have a home.

A Good Thing for All

These conditions are not only beneficial to the people who secure their homes and thus save rent, but make the city a more desirable place for residence for all. The population owning homes is a more stable one, one with more civic pride, one better off and more intelligent, and above all one more moral and law-abiding. Where the people generally own their own homes you are likely to have much less industrial disturbance and civic strife than anywhere else. You are pretty sure to have more intelligent and earnest interest taken in civic affairs, with the result of better government. With the detached home, however modest the cottage may be, if surrounded by a comfortably large lot, the children have an opportunity of being out doors most of the time, and so grow up more healthy, and health of body is usually a concomitant of health of mind, and some of the philologists insist that "wicked" is a corruption of "weak head."

What Subdivisionists Have Done

The underlying impulse in the minds of those who have bought tracts of land and cut them up into lots for residence purposes when they have pressed these upon the buyer on the installment plan may have been to dispose of their holdings, but, however little philanthropy there may have been in the policy, it has been an exceedingly good one. Some of these subdivisionists have cut up raw land into ordinary building lots, some have taken pieces of country far away from the center, even considerable distance outside of the city, and have made quarter-acre, half-acre and acre-building lots. They have had a dozen, may be a score, of energetic, bright salesmen (and women) who have talked into the ears of thousands the desirability of owning one of these lots. The subdivisionists have done a great deal to give the city the stable, intelligent, law-abiding moral citizenship sure to be found where the people own their own homes.

The Street Railway Influence

Of course this development would not have been possible had it not been for the splendid street car service inside and outside the city furnished by the rapid transit railroad operators. It is the wonder of all tourists who come here and go over the lines, noticing the far-reaching ramifications of the several lines, the comfortableness of the cars and the frequency of the service.

The result of all the above is 6, 8, 10 and 12 story steel and concrete buildings, and a general movement onward and upward in every part of El Paso, Texas.

Columns and columns have been written about the Elephant Butte storage reservoir and its effect in the development of the southern Rio Grande valley in Texas, known as

the El Paso Valley, since the government started to build that great irrigation project. Other columns, quite equal in number, have been written concerning the immediate effect upon the El Paso Valley, and yet other columns and columns have been written dealing with the development of the El Paso Valley under the stimulus of capital and modern farming methods!

Practically everything that has been written and said in connection with the development and the future of this valley is literally true, for it is almost impossible to overdo it; yet it is doubtful if one man in a thousand in the Southwest has any adequate conception of just what the future holds for the El Paso Valley or of what has already been accomplished there. It is, indeed, extremely doubtful if the people who have made their homes in the valley for many years and who live there now, realize just what has been done and what is certain to be done in this marvelously fertile region.

But if the people in the valley do not realize what they have at hand they are going to realize it very quickly, for the El Paso valley is just now experiencing an awakening; its people are being stimulated to an activity which is going to carry the valley to the very front rank of the great farming districts of the world. It is a little bit difficult for the average El Pasoan, the man who has lived here all his life and who has become familiar with all of the trials and discouraging conditions bound to surround the development of a new country to realize just what an impetus has been given to the El Paso Valley by the coming of the substantial aid of the national government. The people of the lower Rio Grande are in no wise to be blamed because they have not taken advantage of the riches at their own doors in years past. They didn't have the money and it was difficult to get it; because people with money were hard to convince. But the government came along. Its engineers had worked out and

approved a plan which had been formulating in the brains of pioneers for a quarter of a century, and when it was announced that the government had taken hold and would put through the great Elephant Butte project, the country, or that vast portion of it interested in farming at once began to look toward the El Paso Valley; people with money began to go there to look over the ground, and once there they stayed, while more came and more are coming; rich and poor, all of them finding the opportunity for which they have been seeking. If it is hard for the old resident to realize what is going on at home, it is an easy matter for the newcomer to see it, and the newcomer isn't holding back.

While it is probable that the people of El Paso and the El Paso Valley do not yet realize the full breadth of the development to which the present activity is going to carry them they have a pretty fair idea that something is doing in the development line and they are taking hold with an energy and a push and enterprise which gives final proof that all the people of the El Paso Valley need is a chance.

Reason for Big Crops

There is always a reason for everything, even breakfast foods, if the advertising is to be believed, and there is an abundant reason for the large crops that have been produced in the El Paso Valley during the present year. Water alone will not produce bumper crops in orchards and on ranches unless the soil is composed of materials that will respond to the irrigation and cultivation given to it by the practical irrigationist. In no country in the world is there the intensity and abundance of plant producing elements as in the soil of the El Paso Valley. Not only is the quality the equal of any

known region, but the quantity of the rich plant foods is practically inexhaustible. Having been built up from the silt carried in solution from the upland countries to the north, there is no surface and subsurface soils that represent the sum total of the fertility of the land, but it extends down for a hundred feet and all that is necessary in order to re-fertilize the land after the removal of a crop is the deep plowing and breaking of land by the farmers.

This soil has never been leached of its energy by the excessive rains such as fall in the mountain valleys of Colorado and the north. The rainfall is not a factor in the agricultural industry, and what does fall is immediately absorbed by the ground and there is very little erosion to carry away the plant food. Coupled with this fertility that is stored in the ground is to be considered the continuous fertilization caused by the flooding of the fields by means of the border system of irrigation in use in the valley. The dun colored waters of the Rio Grande are anything but poetic in their appearance, but what is more important commercially, they carry ton after ton of the richest soil from the highlands and deposit it in solution on the lands of the lower valleys, including the El Paso. Ditch cleanings are saved and distributed over the less productive spots in the hay fields or the orchards, it being the best fertilizer obtainable. Low places are built up by means of the settlements of the river water and unproductive places are brought up to the level and fertility of the remainder of the field by means of the rich silt.

The intense dryness of the atmosphere in the El Paso Valley is another active agent in the great production of this section. This dryness causes a rapid evaporation through the stems of the forage grasses and grains. With an abundant supply of water constantly being run onto the land by the irrigation ditches, the plants are able to carry this moisture through their systems, absorbing their plant foods and causing a luxuriant growth which enables the grower to produce many times over the ordinary yield of the rainfall farms. This supply of water can be controlled with the exactness that the electric supply of a factory is estimated, and it is in the power of the planter to produce returns that would be considered little less than wonderful to the uninitiated.

Easy for Settlers to Start

It is not necessary in the El Paso Valley, where intensive cultivation is the keyword to success, for the new settlers to own the half of a township in order to make a living for himself and his family. Twenty acres is considered by the experts to be an abundance of land for one man to work in this valley. Even ten acres can be made to produce double the yield of a tract ten times its size in an unirrigated country. All that is necessary for success in agricultural pursuits in this, the home of agriculture, is that the farmer be a farmer and stay on the job every day in the year. A speaker at the irrigation congress defined the difference between the farmer and the agriculturist as being the difference between the man who made his money on the farm and spent it in town, and the man who made his money on the farm and spent it on the farm. The farmer class is what is needed in the El Paso Valley, for it is necessary to be constantly at work improving, leveling and cultivating the land in order to get the best results. The agriculturist is welcome, but his farm will not show up with his neighbor if it is only given a portion of his time.

Land in good condition, ready for cultivation and provided with water rights under the present system of community ditches, sells from \$100 to \$200, according to location and condition. Unimproved land, by which is meant land that has not been cleared and seeded for crops, can be secured for half this sum per acre, and even cheaper. A costly house is not necessary in this land of temperate climate, and a tent offers ideal sleeping facilities at every season of the year. By the application of the proper diligence in caring for his tract, the first season farmer should be able to make a good payment on his land bought, live comfortably and be able to save a little for the rainy days that seldom come in this land of perpetual sunshine. The second year will enable him to remove all encumbrances from his land and he will be in a position to add to his acres. Such a course will lead to complete independence in a few years.



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